



Minutes

Legal Services Consumer Panel meeting

Date: 31 January 2018

Time: 13:00-16:00

Venue: One Kemble Street, London WC2B 4AN

Present:

Jane Martin	Chair
Andy Foster	Member
Cathy Gallagher	Member
Michelle Goddard	Member
Frances Harrison	Member
Mark McLaren	Member
Marlene Winfield	Member
Lola Bello	Consumer Panel Manager
Laurentiu Ciocan	Consumer Panel Associate
Ramandeep Bhatti	Legal Services Board (Minutes)
Holly Perry	Legal Services Board (Observing)

Item 1 – Welcome and apologies

1. The Chair welcomed the Legal Services Consumer Panel ('The Panel'). Apologies had been received from Steve Jarman from the Ministry of Justice.

Item 2 – Declaration of interests

2. None.

Item 3 – Minutes of 25 October 2017 meeting

3. The Chair presented the minutes from 25 October 2017, which had been agreed via electronic correspondence.

The Panel noted the minutes from 25 October 2017.

Item 4 – Matters arising

4. It was noted that Rebecca Marsh, Chief Ombudsman had accepted an invitation to attend the Panel's April meeting.

5. Holly Perry advised that candidates have been shortlisted for a new Panel Member and interviews were due to take place week commencing 5 February 2018. She also advised that the LSB's Remuneration and Nomination Committee will be considering a paper on Panel Members terms of appointment, as well as the matter of recruiting a new Chair for the Panel.
6. The Secretariat informed the Panel that the Solicitors Regulation Authority is taking the lead on the Legal Choices website and the regulators are collectively commissioning an agency to carry out the work. The Panel emphasised the importance of user testing which the Secretariat agreed to feed back to the Legal Choices Team.

The Panel noted the matters arising.

Item 5 – Ministry of Justice (MoJ) introductory meeting

7. The Chair advised that Steven Jarman, Head of UK Legal Services Policy had sent his apologies.
8. The Panel took the opportunity to discuss engagement with the MoJ, including topics to raise with the MoJ, such as a dialogue on Alternative Dispute Resolution and the need to address issues through lens of consumer protection. The Panel agreed to invite Steve Jarman to the April meeting.
9. The Chair advised that as well as engagement with the MoJ, another route into Parliament is through Baroness Hayter, with whom the Consumer Panel Chair's meet with regularly.

Action point: The Chair is to formally write to Steve Jarman at the MoJ inviting him to attend April's Panel meeting and discuss about the MoJ's response and position of the Competition and Markets Authority recommendations.

Item 6 – Chair's report and members' updates

10. The Chair presented her report on recent meetings verbally.
11. Mark McLaren updated the Panel on his attendance at the Professional Paralegal Register (PPR) Forum Meeting on 28 November 2017. Mark McLaren advised that the CMA were planning an event about their recommendations on price transparency in the unregulated market.
12. The Chair informed the group that she will be standing down as Chair of the Panel, following her decision to accept the role of Board Member of the Office for Legal Complaints. The Chair apologised to the Panel for having to leave her role as Chair only 12 months into the job. However, she noted that this was too good of an opportunity to miss and said she was sorry to be leaving the Panel. She thanked the Panel for their kind words following her announcement.

Action point: The Secretariat was asked to see whether the Panel could secure an invitation to the CMA event.

The Panel noted the Chair's report and Members update.

Item 7 – Projects update

13. The Panel Associate presented the projects update.

14. Frances Harrison informed the group of her impending meeting with the Bar Standards Board to look at the work they produced as part of their Vulnerability Toolkit Task Completion Group.
15. Mark McLaren advised that the PPR is setting up an accreditation scheme. The Chair said it was important to keep a watching brief on the accreditation scheme.

The Panel noted the projects update.

Item 8 – Consultation responses

16. The Panel Associate presented a paper on recent and upcoming consultations.

The Panel noted the LSB's live consultation on its Draft 2018-2021 Strategy and 2018/19 Business Plan consultation. The Panel should expect a response for review shortly.

The Panel noted responses had been submitted to:

- the Law Commission's consultation on *Making a will*
- the CILEx Regulation application to become a Licensing Authority
- the Faculty Office consultation on *delivering transparency for consumers in the legal services market*
- the SRA consultation on *Looking to the future: better information, more choice*
- the CILEx Regulation consultation on *Publishing transparency information for consumers*
- the Council for Licensed Conveyancers consultation on *Helping consumers choose their lawyer: transparency of quality, service and price information*
- the BSB consultation on *Response to the Competition and Market Authority's Recommendations: Policy Consultation on Transparency Standards*
- *the IPReg* consultation on *response to the recommendations of the CMA Legal Services Market Study Report*
- the SRA consultation on *Looking to the future: phase two of our Handbook reforms*
- the BSB consultation on *Shaping the education and training requirements for prospective barristers Draft Authorisation Framework for the Approval of Education and Training Organisations.*

17. The Chair thanked the Secretariat for all their work on responding to the regulators consultations on the CMA recommendations. The Chair advised that the CMA recommendations should be a watching brief.

Action: The Chair to write to CMA advising have seen all responses and request a follow-up meeting.

Item 9 – The Panel's three year strategy 2018-21 and the Work Programme 2018/19

18. The Chair presented the Panel's Draft Strategy 2018-21 and Work Programme 2018/19. This document is shorter, more focussed and simpler. However, she said there were some finishing touches to be made. The Chair asked the Panel to discuss and sign off the draft document.

19. The Panel discussed the draft document including some amendments and questioned whether there was a need to reference Brexit. The Chair said Panel members should send drafting amendments to the Secretariat.
20. The Panel agreed to conduct a stakeholder survey focusing on the effectiveness of the Panel, this point was also to be added to the work programme.

Subject to final amendments the Panel signed off the three year strategy and work programme for the Secretariat to carry out an informal consultation with key stakeholders.

Item 10 – Tracker Survey update

21. The Chair presented a paper on the Tracker Survey which included a draft research plan and tracker survey questions. The Chair invited the Panel to share their views on how to make improvements to the tracker survey.
22. The Panel discussed the following key points:
 - The Panel is considering stopping the national survey in order to expand the legal services users sample.
 - The Secretariat assured the Panel that the questions from the national sample can be retrieved from other pieces of research.
 - With increase in technology and artificial intelligence the Panel agreed that it would be desirable to include questions on these topics
 - The Panel agreed to add questions that would reveal better information on consumer behaviour , specifically around quality and consumer protection - what do respondents consider to be a sign of good quality and if they found this in the service; what quality means to them.
 - The Panel also agreed to add questions that reveal why it is hard for consumers to shop around, ADR and mediation questions.
23. The Panel noted it was important to ask follow-up questions to get more detail on consumer choice and to find out what's driving consumer behaviour.
24. The Chair and Michelle Goddard are to have a teleconference with the research director. The Panel Secretariat would send the revised questions to the Panel.

The Panel noted the update on the tracker survey.

Item 11 – Draft agenda for March 2017

25. The Chair presented the draft agenda for the 7 March 2017 meeting.

The Panel agreed the draft agenda.

Item 12 – Any other business

26. An update was provided on LSB senior staffing matters.